

About Faneuil Hall

Faneuil Hall is over 260 years old. A building as old as this is subject to constant change. There have been several major renovations to the hall.

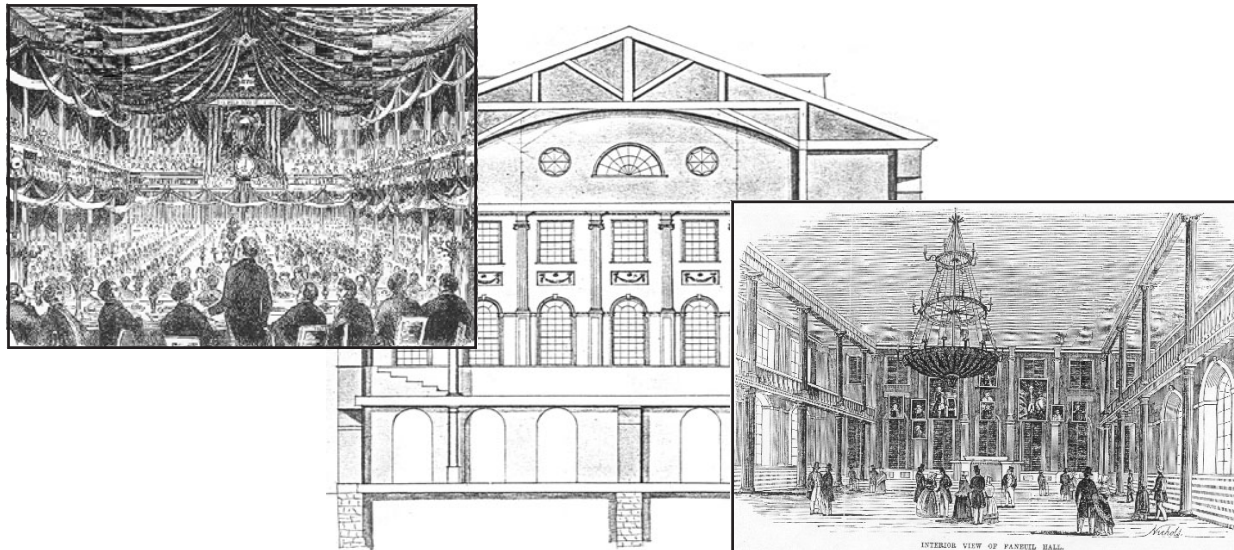
In 1824 the three markets next to Faneuil Hall began to be built. Quincy Market, including both North and South Market buildings, was completed in 1826 and dedicated on August 26th of that year. These markets were thought to be sufficient for meat and produce, so only dry goods (hats, clothing, etc.) were allowed to be sold downstairs for the next 33 years. As part of this renovation, new windows were installed in the Hall. Some of these remain today.

By far, the most extensive renovation was done in 1898-1899 when virtually all of the wooden parts of the structure were removed and replaced by steel beams, making it essentially a steel-framed building.

For example, the columns are steel beams covered with plaster. The cupola is sheet steel. The balusters on the lobby stairs are cast iron replicas of the wooden originals.

The latest renovation illustrates the role of the National Park Service in the preservation of the Hall. The NPS has a cooperative agreement with the city of Boston to help maintain and preserve the building.

From late 1990 to 1992, \$8 million were spent to remove asbestos, improve heating and ventilation, install air conditioning, and clean the great painting of Daniel Webster in the Old Senate Chamber in Washington, DC. When the work was finished, the Hall was reopened to resume its historical role as an active public meeting hall.



Furnishings

Lobby Rail and Balustrade

The cherrywood rail of 1806 was reused and placed upon balusters. The balustrade is made of cast iron (1898).



Great Doors and H-L Hinges

Forged by blacksmiths, the hinges were made in 1806. The large doors, also built in 1806, are designed to speed the exit of large numbers of people from the Hall.



Floor

The floor is a typical gymnasium-like floor made for hard wear. It dates from ca. 1898.



Heating

Central heating was installed ca. 1855. The risers were put in ca. 1840. Note the panels of the risers. They were pushed out to provide a space for hot air to escape and heat the building.



Windows

The wavy windows were put in ca. 1824 as part of an effort to spruce up the building and make it more formal. The ground floor was to be dry goods only. This situation prevailed for 33 years until the ground floor was reopened to the sale of meat and produce. The windows are made from a circular pane of glass about a yard wide, called crown glass.



Cherubs

These cherubic figures may date from ca. 1768 (from paint analysis). It is believed they were reused by Charles Bulfinch from the building of 1763-1805. They were carved by William Burbeck (1716 - 1785), who did the beautiful columns in King's Chapel.



Furnishings



Escutcheon

The circular ornamental decoration in the ceiling is called an escutcheon (Old French 'shield'). It is made in the shape of a lotus blossom, Egyptian symbol of immortality, and installed ca. 1840-1860. The chandelier, originally suspended from the center, was removed ca. 1860 after gaslight was installed. There are 48 globes in the circle, symbolizing the 48 states of the US extant at the time the circle was last restored in 1923.



Pilasters

The flat, square, imitation pillars or pilasters (Greek for 'would-be pillar') existing in the old building were reused by Charles Bulfinch. Because they were worn, they were 'kicked upstairs' to the gallery level and the Corinthian ones were replaced by Doric at the Hall level. (Some of the gallery pilasters were also replaced). Like the cherubs, they may date from ca. 1768 and were carved by William Burbeck (1716-1785).



The Eagle

Made of marble dust, lime putty, white horsehair, and ground oyster shells, this mighty bird once stood on the First Bank of the United States, Boston branch, from 1798-1824, when it was brought across the street (from present #28 State Street). It was carved by Daniel Reynert, carver for Charles Bulfinch, who designed both the bank (1798) and the Hall (1806).

The Clock

Designed by Howard and Davis of Roxbury, it has one of the last mechanical works in Boston. It is wound only during scheduled meetings. It was donated to the City by the children of Boston in 1850.



Electricity and Gaslight

The building was electrified in 1898-99. Before that, from ca. 1852-1898, there was gaslight. The ornate brass gas sconces were reused and wired for electricity.



Stage

The stage dates from ca. 1872-1875.

Thrones

The three regal throne-like chairs date from the 1860's. No one ever seems to use them. They're just for decoration.



Windsor Chairs

The old style Windsor chairs, of a design going back to the 17th century, actually date from ca. 1898.



Podium

Dating from the 1870's, the podium is crafted in the Victorian gothic style and is made of oak.

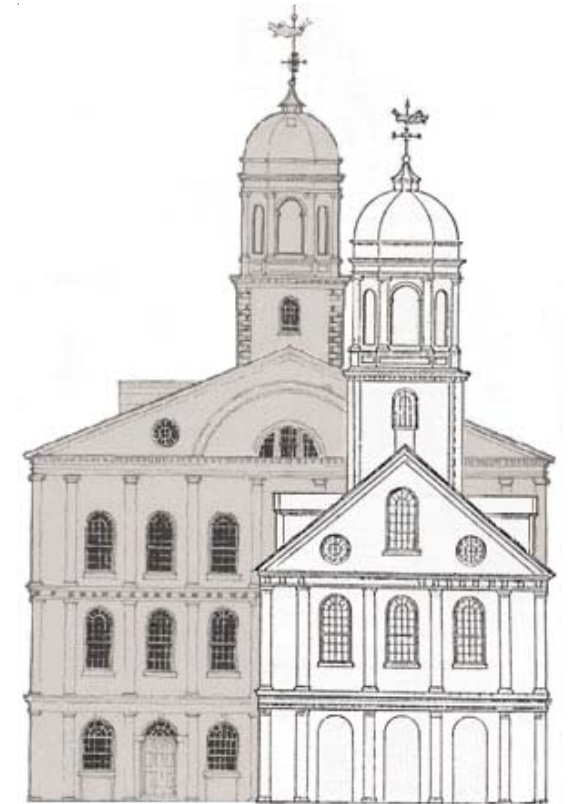


Chairs

The main chairs in the Hall appeared in 1911. They are made of maple.



Faneuil Hall What's Original?



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